UNITED
NATIONS

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Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/1996/1055
17 December 1996

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON HIS MISSION OF GOOD OFFICES IN CYPRUS

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to the Security Council's request in paragraph 14 of its resolution 1062 (1996) of 28 June 1996 that I report on the implementation of that resolution. My report on those aspects of the resolution which relate to the United Nations peacekeeping operation in Cyprus has already been submitted to the Council, on 10 December 1996 (S/1996/1016). The present report concerns my mission of good offices.

2. In the most recent report on my mission of good offices, dated 25 June 1996 (S/1996/467), I informed the Council that the considerable efforts undertaken during the previous 20 months had not succeeded in breaking the impasse in Cyprus. They had included a number of separate meetings between myself and the leaders of the two communities; direct talks between the two leaders hosted in October 1994 by my Deputy Special Representative, Mr. Gustave Feissel; various missions to Cyprus, Greece and Turkey by my then Special Representative, Mr. Joe Clark; and efforts by a number of interested Governments.

3. In resolution 1062 (1996), the Security Council reiterated its concern that there had been no progress towards an overall settlement of the Cyprus problem, reiterated that the status quo was unacceptable, and called upon the parties to demonstrate concretely their commitment to an overall settlement. The Council also called upon the two leaders to work with the Secretary-General and with the many countries supporting his mission of good offices to break the current impasse by establishing common ground on which direct negotiations could be resumed. The Council further recognized that the decision of the European Union concerning the opening of accession negotiations with Cyprus was an important new development that should facilitate an overall settlement.

II. A REVIEW OF THE EFFORTS MADE SINCE JUNE 1996

4. In the course of the past six months, intensive efforts have been made to break the impasse and to create conditions for successful direct negotiations between the leaders of the Greek Cypriot and the Turkish Cypriot communities.

5. As envisaged in my last report, my new Special Representative, Mr. Han Sung-Joo, undertook an extensive familiarization mission during the last week in June and the first half of July. In Cyprus he had two extended meetings with each of the two leaders, as well as meetings with political party leaders, businessmen and trade unionists on both sides. He went on to visit Athens and Ankara, as well as the capitals of a number of interested Governments, notably London, Moscow, Paris and Washington, and Dublin and Brussels for meetings with the Presidency of the European Union (EU) and the European Commission respectively. On subsequent occasions, he visited Bonn, London and Paris.

6. He found that the situation in the area remained very much as described in my last report. The positions of the two leaders appeared far apart on a number of issues. The Greek Cypriot leader emphasized that in order to avoid yet another unproductive direct meeting, it was necessary to ensure that sufficient common ground existed between the two sides before direct talks began. He identified five key areas in which common ground had to be established: security, EU membership, territory, sovereignty and political equality. The Turkish Cypriot leader, for his part, reaffirmed his readiness to meet for direct talks within the parameters of an equal partnership and the 1960 Treaty of Guarantee. He opposed any change in the 1960 Treaty of Guarantee, including Turkey's right of unilateral intervention. He was also opposed to Cyprus joining the European Union before Turkey, which, he believed, would negate what he regarded as the foundation of an overall settlement, notably bizonality and the Treaty of Guarantee. It was thus clear that direct talks would not at that time yield positive results.

7. My Special Representative reported to me that his meetings with a broad cross-section of the two communities had revealed a plurality of views and opinions. He underlined the critical importance of support from Greece and Turkey if negotiations were to succeed. He saw the issue of the accession of Cyprus to the European Union as an important new factor. The decision by EU to begin accession negotiations with Cyprus six months after the conclusion of its Intergovernmental Conference had in effect established a time-frame of approximately 18 months for the achievement of an overall settlement. It was therefore important for all concerned to redouble their efforts. He told me that this assessment was shared by his interlocutors in the capitals he had visited.

8. My Special Representative's second visit to the area in mid-September was overshadowed by the incidents on 11 and 14 August and their aftermath, which had raised tensions on the island to a high level (see S/1996/1016, paras. 2-11). His discussions with the leaders of the two communities therefore focused on ways of reducing the tension. To this end, he built upon the efforts of my Deputy Special Representative to encourage the two leaders to issue a joint statement which would make clear that the incidents did not reflect the true sentiments of the people of the two communities; that such incidents must never occur again; that they underscored the urgent need to resolve differences through negotiation; and that the leaders pledged themselves to redouble their efforts to cooperate with the Secretary-General and work tirelessly to reach an overall settlement. The Turkish Cypriot leader agreed to such a joint statement but the Greek Cypriot leader considered that, given the circumstances surrounding the incidents, a joint statement would not be appropriate. However,

he subsequently issued a statement of his own that the incidents must not dissuade the parties from pursuing with increased energy efforts to find an overall settlement under the auspices of the Secretary-General and that they could not be interpreted to mean that the two communities cannot live together in peace and prosperity in their common home, Cyprus. He also called upon both communities to make every effort to defuse the existing tensions.

9. Throughout the period covered by the present report, my Deputy Special Representative continued his regular meetings with the leaders of the two communities in an effort to promote the conditions for direct talks to achieve an overall settlement; to address the serious problems resulting from the August incidents and subsequent ones which also resulted in fatalities; and to lay the basis for the discussions which are currently under way between the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) and the military authorities on both sides on proposals for the reduction of tension along the ceasefire lines (see S/1996/1016). The Deputy Special Representative also remained in close touch with representatives of Governments that have been actively supporting my mission of good offices.

10. The third visit to the area by my Special Representative took place in mid-December. In Cyprus, he held two separate meetings with each of the two leaders. In Athens and Ankara, he met with senior Foreign Ministry officials. The main purpose of this visit was to assess the situation on the eve of my preparation of the present report. He found that the gap in the positions of the two sides had not narrowed and that each leader continued to express serious doubts about the true intentions of the other. This made it difficult to be optimistic about the prospects for direct talks. On the substance, the two leaders reiterated their well-known positions, as described in paragraph 6 above. The Greek Cypriot leader said that, in view of the campaign which would precede the presidential elections scheduled for February 1998, the window of opportunity for negotiations was likely to close by the autumn of 1997. My Special Representative reiterated to both leaders and to his interlocutors in Athens and Ankara the concern of the United Nations and the international community about the existing situation in Cyprus. He emphasized the urgent need for direct negotiations on an overall settlement and for intensified preparations for such negotiations to begin early in 1997, with the active support of Greece and Turkey.

11. In my last report I noted the growing international interest in the Cyprus problem, in particular among the permanent members of the Security Council and the members of the European Union. This has continued to intensify. During the period under review, senior officials from France, the EU Presidency (Ireland), the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America visited Cyprus, Greece and Turkey, in some cases several times. Their purpose was to help overcome the existing impasse by exploring possible ways of bringing the positions of the two sides closer together and to seek greater support from Greece and Turkey. The missions by the Special Representative of the EU Presidency focused in particular on a possible EU contribution to an overall settlement in the context of the EU's decision to initiate accession negotiations with Cyprus. Such a contribution would include explanation of the benefits which EU membership would bring to all Cypriots and would also address Turkish Cypriot concerns about its implications for an

overall settlement of the Cyprus problem, particularly as regards bizonality, the Turkish guarantee and the relationship of Greece and Turkey with Cyprus. All the senior officials who undertook these missions recognized the importance of ensuring that the efforts of interested Governments are coordinated with those of the Secretary-General's mission of good offices. To this end, regular consultations have taken place between the United Nations and representatives of interested Governments in Cyprus, at United Nations Headquarters and elsewhere.

III. OBSERVATIONS

12. The Cyprus problem has been at an impasse for a considerable time. Since my last report, the situation has deteriorated seriously and has been marked by a level of violence unprecedented since 1974. Frustration that a settlement has proved elusive for so long runs deep within both communities. Unless the political leadership on both sides manifests the necessary determination to negotiate an overall settlement and this process is fully supported by Greece and Turkey, the present unstable situation will persist and even lead to greater dangers.

13. The developments of recent months and the military build-up in Cyprus have underscored what the Security Council has pointed out for so long, that the status quo in Cyprus is most unstable and is not tenable. The events of recent months are a warning. If the current situation is allowed to persist, the consequences will be to the detriment of both communities.

14. The apparent calm that has prevailed for some years has lulled political leaders and the people of both communities into a false sense of stability. Many continue to believe that the situation will remain stable until the underlying dispute is resolved. Beneath the surface, however, the situation in Cyprus is changing, in terms both of the demographic composition of the island and of the relationship of the two communities with each other and to the outside world. Either the two communities will take control of their destiny by reaching an overall settlement on the basis that has already been agreed, or forces beyond their control will fundamentally change the situation on the island.

15. As has often been pointed out before, the exercise of good offices by successive Secretaries-General has, over the years, generated the substantive elements necessary to reach an overall agreement, as well as the procedures for achieving that objective. I refer especially to the 1977 and 1979 high-level agreements in which the leaders of the two communities agreed on key principles of a solution, including the establishment of a bicommunal and bizonal federation whose independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity would be guaranteed. Other key principles are to be found in Security Council resolutions, in the Set of Ideas and in other ideas explored in recent years. Procedurally, it has become evident that an overall settlement can best be reached through mutual concessions in a comprehensive negotiating session which will continue as long as necessary to reach agreement.

16. As the Security Council recognized in resolution 1062 (1996), the decision of the European Union to open accession negotiations with Cyprus is an important

new development that should facilitate an overall settlement. That decision and the timetable that flows from it provide an additional important reason for both sides to redouble their efforts. It is clearly in the vital interests of both communities to reach a solution before accession negotiations begin. It is widely believed that the accession by Cyprus to EU membership in a manner consistent with the agreed basis for an overall settlement would offer both communities the opportunity for enhanced prosperity and security.

17. An urgent effort is accordingly required in 1997 to bring about early direct talks between the two leaders, in the manner described above, to negotiate an overall agreement. Both leaders should clearly and publicly commit themselves to such a process.

18. To facilitate this objective, preparations for direct negotiations are being intensified by the Secretariat. The extensive material which already exists is being reviewed and, as appropriate, updated and expanded, and additional material prepared, so that the United Nations will be in a position to help the leaders of the two communities reach common positions during their negotiations. In addition, more intensive contacts with the leaders of the two communities and with Greece and Turkey are planned for the new year, including longer visits to Cyprus and to the area by my Special Representative. I rely on continued support by interested Governments for these initiatives. I also call upon the Governments of Greece and Turkey, which have a special obligation to Cyprus, to become more active in support of the Secretary-General's mission of good offices.

19. The success of this effort will depend to an important extent on the creation of an atmosphere of confidence and reconciliation between the two communities. Both leaders must give tangible indications that they are seeking an overall settlement on the basis of <u>one</u> country and to ensure that their words and deeds are in harmony with that objective. Such a change in attitude cannot wait for a settlement; it must precede it and should be adopted without delay. The emphasis in their public statements and in their communications with each other must shift away from polemics and mutual accusations and towards their future relationship in a federal Cyprus. Messages of reconciliation and tolerance from both leaders and their communities are long overdue.

20. Both sides should also implement goodwill measures that give tangible indications of their good intentions and help create an atmosphere of confidence. Such measures could include the following: crossing with minimal formality by members of both communities at the Ledra Palace checkpoint (e.g., by only presenting identity cards); facilitating bicommunal contacts; cooperation and joint projects in areas of inter-communal concern such as the environment, water, health, education (including the elimination of biased and negative representations of each other) and the restoration of historic sites; youth and student exchanges; bicommunal sports events; elimination of provocative emblems and slogans; island-wide telephone communications; and bicommunal commercial activities and trade. I call on both leaders to take such measures.

21. Furthermore, it is important that the UNFICYP proposals for further unmanning, the prohibition of loaded weapons and a military code of conduct along the ceasefire lines be agreed to and implemented without delay.

22. The current situation offers the two communities, and the region, both a warning signal and an opportunity. The two leaders have a responsibility to their communities and to Cyprus as a whole to recognize the seriousness of the moment and to seize the opportunity it presents by agreeing to negotiate a comprehensive settlement on the basis of mutual concessions and to facilitate this process by conveying to each other in both words and deeds a message of reconciliation. In conclusion, I call upon both leaders to cooperate with my Special Representative and my Deputy Special Representative and with the Governments that support the Secretary-General's mission of good offices.